

Prayers of the People. February 27, 2022. First Presbyterian Church, Portage

Let's join our hearts and minds in prayer, pray with me:

Gracious God, Comforter of all who put their trust in You, we acknowledge that our trust is wavering. So many stressful things are happening; health issues... life is so fragile; financial pressures... Loved ones are dependent on us; family situations... poor decisions have led to poor attitudes. Lord, like David we need to tell You all our troubles. We feel battered, pummeled, overwhelmed, helpless--fearful in the midst of our circumstances. Our vision is limited to this day... We can't see over or around or through or beyond our circumstances. In such a time as this, David said: "God is our refuge"

Refuge... God is our shelter, protection, safety, security, anchorage, resource, seclusion, aid, defense, support, guardianship, haven, fortress, provision. When we consider what You are, we recall the words of the poet; "other refuge have I none; hang my hopeless soul on thee. Leave, ah leave me not alone, still support and comfort me."

Lord Your eternal Word assures us that You are a very present help, not a distant help, not a begrudging help, not a delaying help, not an inadequate help, not an illusory nor fickle help... But a prevalent, substantial, immediate efficacious, powerful help in time of need. Now, in Your house, in Your presence each of us confess our sins, confess our needs, confess our utter trust in You, in our silent prayer.

Thank You, Father God. With renewed vigour we refresh our souls by the words of scripture: "The Lord will work out His plans for our life. They will see in our history the faithful love of the Lord. Great shepherd make this true: that our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, neighbors, friends, extended family, unbelievers, coworkers... Everyone who has eyes to see and ears to hear will know... God is faithful praise His name forever.

Omnipotent God we praise You that Jesus is Victor over Satan and all his evil powers -- that He triumphed over them through the cross and resurrection, and that You highly exulted Him. You have given Him a position infinitely superior to all powers and authorities... a name that stands far above all other names that will ever be used... Amazing grace... You have raised us up and enthroned us with Him in the heavenly realms. How we praise You that we need not strive toward a possible victory, but can live from a position of victory already won -- that He

who is in us (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is greater than he who is in the world... That although Satan is powerful he cannot prevail against the blood of the Lamb and the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You that Satan must retreat before that Name and before Your Word, the living and powerful sword of the Spirit. And that in the end he will be cast down into everlasting defeat and shame. What a joy to know that You are the same today as You were centuries ago in Isaiah's day, when You promised to rescue Your people in a hopeless looking situation, when the enemy seemed to have prevailed. How we love the words You spoke to them: "Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame... Even the captives of the mighty men will be taken away, and the prey of the tyrant will be rescued, for I will contend with the one who contends with you, and I will save your sons." We praise You that we can count on You to do this in our spiritual warfare, and that through You we shall do valiantly, for You will trample down our enemies.

Lord, give us direction to know how to pray in every situation and for every concern. Make us bold to ask. Enable us to ask according to Your will. Give us faith to believe that impossible things can happen when we pray. Forgive us when we have any doubt about Your ability to answer. We confess all doubt in us as sin and ask you to cleanse us of it. Replace doubt with strong faith that all things are possible because we trust in You.

Father, we think of First church and the congregation here. We are thankful that we have a place to come and worship, we are thankful for John and his leadership. We are thankful for all of the work that people do to help us keep the doors of First church open. Bless them in their service, continue to give them the energy that is needed to do the work that they do. Help us to never take all of this for granted. Help us to give You the honour and the glory for all that is done in Your name.

Father God, we bring this congregation and membership before You, we wonder what we can do to increase our numbers, to get people back into the church, to become part of this congregation. We continue to bring this situation before You in prayer and ask Your help in what we need to do to further Your kingdom. We pray for those that are not here this morning ,for whatever reason. We pray that You will bring peace to those that are suffering, to those that are dealing with family issues, to those that are experiencing loneliness and or aloneness. Help each one of us to do our part to help this congregation grow. Help us to bring it to You in prayer on a daily basis. Help us to take action to further Your Kingdom. God of understanding, You know each one of us, help us to bring our concerns to You in prayer as we pray silently now for those concerns. (*Pause*) Lord, hear our prayers.

Sovereign Lord, Great Shepherd of the sheep, meet with us this morning as we have our Annual General Meeting. We recognize You as head of the Church, which You purchased with Your own blood. We gather in no other name but Yours. We acknowledge no other leader but You. You have blessed us with godly leaders who loved us, cared for us, prayed for us, instructed us, and lived righteously before us. We praise You for every one of them Your faithful servants. It is by Your grace that we have come to consider the church's business. We have prayed, and You have brought together the events of the past year. May we, like those praying believers in the book of Acts, be able to say, "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us."

Lead us as You led the early church. Now we earnestly seek Your face in our deliberations. As You led the Jerusalem Council, as You led the circle of believers at Antioch, lead us by giving us a spirit of unity. However you lead us, God, may it be said of our church, "How they loved one another."

May Your divine love permeate this place, now and always, we pray earnestly believing in the deliverance of a mighty God and a precious Saviour.

Loving Father, we thank You for the blessings of the past week and look forward to those of the coming week. We will be careful to give You the Honour and the Glory. As we leave this place of worship we ask You to continue to bless us and make us a blessing to others for we ask these things in the name of Your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.